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The Cut Flower QUARTERLY

Association of Specialty Cut Flower Growers Inc.

for growers of field and greenhouse specialty cuts

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From the PRESIDENT

Outgoing — and Outstanding

Dave Dowling

I've lost count of how many times I've written a column or article for *The Cut Flower Quarterly*, but this is my last one as a Board member. I first joined the Board in 2002 as the Mid-Atlantic Regional Director, then four years as President, a couple years as Industry Liaison, and another three years as President. After twelve years on the Board, it's someone else's turn. I welcome our new President, Jennie or Leah, to the position.

I've always tried to dish up some encouragement, along with marketing or growing information, sprinkled with a little humor to keep your attention. I hope I've been able to help you in some way or another with my columns during my time on the Board.

It's no secret that ASCFG membership has exploded in recent years. We reached the 1,600 mark in late September. That's 1,000 more members than just five years ago. I attribute this increase mainly to the internet, as growers find us through Facebook and Instagram. Add in some flower-farmer advocates like Erin Benzakein, Lisa Ziegler, and Lynn Byczynski, and authors like Amy Stewart and Debra Prinzing, and all the stars aligned to create a huge increase in "new" flower farmers. Time will tell how many of these new growers are in it for the long run. I hope all of you find success and continue in the business as you have the desire, drive, market, and ability to do so.

I want to thank all my fellow Board members who have helped guide this organization year after year. Organizing great conferences and presenting sessions at them, and many even opening up their farms for tours and meetings. Having Board members who are invested and engaged in the Association is what keeps the ASCFG fresh and relevant to members, both new and old.

Dave with a small percentage of his siblings.

Being on the Board is relatively easy. Really. As I hope everyone knows, it is Judy Laushman and Linda Twining who keep the wheels turning for the ASCFG. Working from a little office, at the top of old, steep stairs, in a vintage commercial building "on the Square" in Oberlin, Ohio, they do just about everything, and anything to keep the ASCFG running smoothly. Thank you, Judy and Linda!

At the Raleigh Conference, I was surprised with the ASCFG Outstanding Service Award during the banquet. Four of my sisters and a niece traveled down from Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia to be part of the celebration surprise. How they all kept it a secret since *March*, I'll never know. I was caught up in the moment, getting emotional to the point where I could hardly say anything. Imagine that, me unable to speak! I'd like to thank those responsible for awarding me this honor. Like I tried to say that night, I grew up in a family where our Mother would help anyone who needed something. Growing up in a crowded house with lots of children (I'm #11 of 12 children) there seemed to always be someone extra at the dinner table, and more often than not, an extra person or two living with us for some reason or another. We all learned to help others, share our knowledge, and expect nothing in return. It's just the way we do things. I hope a little of that attitude has rubbed off on my fellow ASCFG members.

While I'm no longer on the Board after December, I'll be on our Facebook page, and I'll still attend meetings and conferences when I can, and hope to see you there. In the meantime, keep growing the best flowers in the world! Thanks.

Dave Dowling is a Sales Representative and Warehouse Manager for Ednie Flower Bulb.
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The Farmer and the Florist

Farmer-Florist and Florist Competition: Part Two

Ellen Frost and Laura Beth Resnick

Many flower farmers in recent years have jumped on the design train, adding weddings and single orders to our offerings. It makes sense: the flowers are in our backyards! Not all farmer-florists have the same issues, but in general, two major conflicts arise between farmers who design and the florists they sell to. The first has to do with pricing, and the second is about competition.

Farmer-Florists and Pricing

Many new farmer-florists price their wedding design services as though the flowers are free. Let's say Laura Beth starts designing weddings and bases her pricing on her time, and materials like vases and floral tape. But she doesn't include flowers in the budget because she always has extra flowers on the farm and can use much of what she didn't sell to florists that week in her weddings.

To Laura Beth, the flowers are basically free since she isn't going to sell them anyway. She figures she can charge a wedding client way less for wedding floral design than Ellen must because Laura Beth doesn't need to include the cost of flowers in the budget. Her wedding services will be a steal for prospective brides and grooms! Combine that mentality with a raging trend for "the farm-fresh, wildflower look," and you have brides and grooms lining up at the door for those low-cost wedding services. Great, right?

Nope. Because trends come and go, and one day soon the pendulum will swing back to a more formal wedding look. All of those couples will back away from farmer-florists, and seek out more traditional florists again. By that time, we will have pissed off all the florists who saw us undercutting them, and we'll have no one to sell our flowers to. That's no good!

The solution is simple. Farmers should charge for our flowers when we design. If we do, then the price of our wedding services will be comparable to florists'. The playing field will be level, and we'll compete mostly based on quality, style, and customer service, rather than extreme price variations. Fewer florists will feel undercut, and farmers will make more money because they're charging for their flowers instead of considering them free. It's a win-win!

Some farmer-florists create two businesses under the same roof to prevent this confusion: the farm business grows the flowers, the floral design business buys the flowers. That way, the cost of the flowers absolutely must be accounted for in the budget. But if you're not ready to buy a new trade name yet, you can simply calculate the number of stems you'll need for a wedding, and include the cost of those flowers in your budget. Then, your quote to the client reflects the real value of your services.

It's our belief that a little more thought and mindfulness when it comes to pricing will go a long way. If your flowers or design services are far out of range with those around you, don't necessarily change your pricing to fit the mold. But do take a moment to consider the reasons behind your pricing and the effect it has on your local flower industry. If we all charge the value of our services, we'll all be more prosperous.

Farmer-Florists and Competition with their Florists

Farmers who design can be in direct competition with their neighborhood florists. There is nothing wrong with that—healthy competition makes our businesses better! Competition requires us to strive for higher quality and creativity.

However, some wedding florists will have a problem with their farmer, who is their supplier, competing for clients. That doesn't mean the farmer should stop offering floral design services. We would just caution farmers to be mindful about how their design services affect their florists. If a florist feels threatened or betrayed, he or she may decrease ordering or simply end the relationship.

Here's our advice for farmers who are both designing for wedding clients AND selling to florists who design weddings: First, evaluate the pros and cons of designing. Be aware of the possibility that there will be unintended consequences or hard feelings. It might be worth it because your weddings are profitable. But, don't be surprised if you lose some business from florists along the way.

Second, have respectful conversations with your florists. If you're not sure how they feel, find a good time (not during wedding season!) and simply ask "Do you feel we're taking customers away from you with our floral design services?" If the florist feels that you are, that's an opening for you to think about how to differentiate what you offer so that you can design and also keep your florist happy.

Third, this is tricky. We've all had business relationships that got messy and there seemed to be no clear resolution. If a florist takes issue with your design services, listen to her concerns, and then either make changes to your model or go forward with your plans. But either way, respond with respect and compassion. We're all (florists too) trying to do our best work out in the world, even if sometimes that means stepping on each others' toes.

What kind of competition challenges are you facing? We want to hear from you! Email us at butterbeefarm@gmail.com or ellen@locoflo.com

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Picture Perfect

Kelly Perry

A magazine photo inspired a new career

A photo in *Martha Stewart Living* led Kelly Perry to a career in flowers.

The former event coordinator recalls seeing a photo spread in the iconic magazine featuring images of women walking down the streets of New York with buckets of flowers, and feeling "called" to learn more. She found the florists—Nicolette Owen and Sarah Ryhanen of Little Flower School—online, and traveled to their New York studio to take a class.

"A part of me woke up," she recalls. "I floated out of the workshop and into a taxi so excited about flowers."

Inspired by the class, Perry traveled around the country participating in several more floral design workshops. She loved turning single stems into colorful, well-designed bouquets but had no plans to turn her passion for flowers into a full-time job.

Changing Paths

When a car accident left Perry with near-constant headaches and a need to find a career that was more flexible than event planning, she knew flowers were the answer.

Perry launched Philosophy Flowers in 2012, designing flowers for weddings. Her portfolio ranges from bridal bouquets, boutonnieres, and floral crowns to centerpieces, garlands, and napkin embellishments. The florist drove hither and yon to meet with growers near her Boone, North Carolina, home to source local blooms for her wedding arrangements. The ASCFG online directory proved an invaluable resource to find local growers.

"I love to know where my flowers came from and who grew them," she explains. "Local flowers tell a story. You can feel the love in their petals!"

As her wedding business blossomed, so did the idea for a second business.

Perry wanted to provide a place where growers and designers could come together to learn from each other and share ideas; she believed a virtual gathering space would help those in the industry feel less isolated and provide the support and resources they needed to build their businesses. Team Flower launched in 2014.

Jesse and Kelly Perry, Team Flower

"Whether we grow them or arrange them, flowers are an opportunity to build relationships and community", she says. "Regardless of what part of the business you're in, Team Flower is a place where we can all connect and talk about where the floral industry is headed."

Team Flower offers resources, online classes, an annual conference, special events, and a virtual community all aimed at professional growers and designers at all stages of their businesses.

"Team Flower exists because I don't want anyone to quit a life with flowers because they have run out of the money or strength they need to keep going", Perry says. "For us to focus on our passions, we need a solid understanding of the business side. There are so many ways to think through revenue streams. We want to help people figure out their next steps."

In addition to being the founder of Team Flower, Perry is also a customer. She has participated in Foundations for Growing Cut Flowers, Growing for Fall Weddings, and Growing for Spring Weddings classes to learn more about the grower side of the business.

Perry teaches design and business classes, including Principles of Design and How to Photograph Flowers but she relies on experts like Kathleen Murphy and longtime ASCFG member Linda Doan to teach the foundations of flower farming. She maintains a small cutting garden at her Boone, North Carolina, home, using techniques she learned in the classes to grow beautiful blooms.

"We don't have a lot of space so each year I try something different," she says.

This season, she's experimenting with dahlias. Eventually, she hopes to have enough land to maintain test gardens for Team Flower.

Branching Out

In addition to maintaining a blog and libraries of articles and how-to videos on the Team Flower website, Perry launched a podcast in 2017. The episodes feature interviews with industry experts about topics ranging from branding and marketing to balancing work and family. What started as an experiment turned into a hallmark offering for Team Flower.

"Working with flowers is a solitary business," Perry says. "The podcast is another place where we can come together."

Like all of the Team Flower offerings, the podcast is geared toward industry professionals who want to grow their businesses.

Perry is focused on growing her business, too. Philosophy Flowers has been featured with *Martha Stewart Weddings, Brides, The Knot*, and *Southern Weddings*; Team Flower has over 2,000 members in its online community from 30-plus countries—and Perry attributes the success to the fact that Team Flower is a team.

She operates both businesses in partnership with her husband, Jesse, who handles all of the high-tech, behind-the-scenes logistics that make Team Flower tick. The business also employs four additional staff that handles tasks ranging from social media and copywriting to marketing.

Perry isn't sure what the future holds for Philosophy Flowers or Team Flower, explaining, "As an entrepreneur there are a thousand different things you could do next. Knowing which one is next is what I find challenging. With that being said, I have no idea what either of these businesses will look like in five years but I do know we'll still be here doing what we are doing now: connecting and encouraging people."

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Cucumber Beetle Control

Stanton Gill

If you grow squash, cucumber or pumpkins as well as cut flowers, you are probably extremely familiar with a group of pests called cucumber beetles. "Cucumber beetle" is a common name given to members of two genera of beetles, *Diabrotica* and *Acalymma*, both in the family Chrysomelidae.

The striped cucumber beetle (*Acalymma vittatum*) and the spotted cucumber beetle (*Diabrotica undecimpunctata howardi*) occur throughout the continental United States.

As a cut flower grower, why should you be concerned about these two beetles? Well, besides feeding on cucumbers and other melon crops, the adults love to feed on the petals of dahlias, zinnias, sunflowers, and occasionally marigolds.

The adults chew chunks out of the ray petals making the beautiful cut flower look ragged and bedraggled. The adults are active from late spring to early in the summer right through the fall, prime cut flower production seasons.

Spotted cucumber beetle on zinnia

Life Cycle

Adult cucumber beetles overwinter in protected areas near buildings, in fencerows, or in woodlots. They become active in mid-spring, when temperatures begin to increase. Currently, there is no good method for predicting when activity will begin. Generally, it's when temperatures reach 70-75F for a couple of days in a row. Beetles quickly locate host plants in the spring. The adults feed, and females deposit eggs in cracks in the soil at the base of cucurbits. We have not directly observed females laying eggs on the roots of sunflowers, dahlias or zinnias, and I could not find in published, refereed literature that anyone has published finding the beetle laying eggs on these cut flowers. Still, adult beetles manage to find the plants when they come into flower, and adults are strong fliers.

The larvae can feed on the roots of corn and some ornamental grasses. If someone is growing melon crops within one to two miles of your cut flower operation, adults can fly into your fields.

The eggs hatch and the larvae feed on the roots. These larvae will pupate in the soil, and later in the summer the next generation will emerge, and also feed on the cucumber and melon plants, as well as on sunflowers, dahlias, zinnias, and marigolds. These adults overwinter until the following spring.

Problems with Chemical Control

Since the adult cucumber beetles feed on ray petals, if you use an insecticide you will likely also be killing pollinators and beneficial organisms visiting your cut flowers. Systemic insecticides applied as soil drenches avoid the spraying but unfortunately, the chemical rarely, if ever, moves into the flower itself.

Traps and Baits

At the Cultivate 2018 conference in Ohio, I ran into Jan Meneley of AgBio Company in Westminster, Colorado. AgBio carries a sticky trap that you bait with a product highly attractive to adult cucumber beetles. This lure is a proprietary mixture of cucumber beetle pheromones and kairomones (attractants).The bait and yellow color of the trap work together to pull the adult toward the sticky material covering the trap. Jan sent us several traps which we tested at two cut flower sites in Maryland. The traps appear to be effective in pulling in the adult beetles. In addition, a ton of fungus gnat adults and several fly species were attracted to the yellow sticky trap. You will need to change the trap once every week or it becomes too cluttered. So far, we have not seen any damage to the dahlias at either site since we started using the baited traps. We will continue using these traps through the fall and will let you know in future articles and presentations if they continue to be effective.

Trécé Incorporated offers a bait material for cucumber beetles called Cidetrac D (for *Diabrotica*) which is a curcurbitacin product from the powdered root of buffalo gourd. This bitter material attracts *Diabrotica* and repels many beneficials. It can be mixed with spinosad (or Mycotrol) and sprayed as a bait spray to attract and kill cucumber beetles with minimum damage to beneficials. Bait spray is large droplets that are widely scattered and can be used on surrounding vegetation.

Attracting the Beetles to Bait Plants

Cucumber beetle adults love alfalfa plants, so some growers grow a strip of alfalfa in the field or in pots, then vacuum them when they see cucumber beetles on the plants. This is assuming you have a strong vacuum and do not want to spray anything. If you are willing to spray, treat the trap plants with a contact insecticide.

Stanton Gill is a Regional Specialist in IPM and Entomology, CMREC, University of Maryland Extension, and Professor with Montgomery College Landscape Technology Program. Contact him at sgill@umd.edu

Cucumber beetle lure and sticky trap

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Inspiration Leads to Innovation

Mary Stephanie Kilroe, Dancing Hearts Homestead

The Raleigh Conference wasn't just my first ASCFG event. It was a chance to meet Val Schirmer, Southeast Regional Director, for whom I credit my entry into selling flowers to a retail store.

I was a new member, having just joined in early 2017 on the recommendation of my friend and fellow flower farmer, Gail Zorn of Daybreak Flower Farm. In April 2017, I had grown a basic crop of tender annuals: sunflowers, zinnias, and gomphrena with low but consistent sales to wholesalers. The sales were just enough to keep me interested in continuing to grow flowers.

By the end of my first season in October, I received the fall issue of *The Cut Flower Quarterly*. I hadn't read the previous one because I had been so busy, but I remembered the cost of my membership and said to myself, "I should read this". I enjoyed the columns from each Regional Director but was especially interested to read Val's article since I live in Georgia, part of her Region. Her article outlined increasing sales during slow times and how to achieve that through holiday sales.

My imagination was captured! Val very clearly and generously explained how she was successful by forcing amaryllis and paperwhites to bloom, making forcing kits, and assembling bulbs in burlap bags. It was a perfect blueprint for low, medium, and high price points. After I finished reading, I said to myself, "I can do that."

I immediately registered for nearby holiday festivals scheduled for early December. I had to source everything at the retail level because I was starting so much later for the holiday season. I had no idea if this was going to work but wanted to give it a try. I followed up by researching where I was going to purchase terra cotta pots, soil, ribbon, and tags. I went to Home Depot for terra cotta pots; Michaels and Hobby Lobby for ribbon and pot covers; and a local grower outlet for bulbs. I put it all together for the first festival in Rutledge, Georgia.

One of the pleasures was to hear customers reminisce that their mother or grandmother would always buy a blooming amaryllis for Christmas. I didn't sell out, but sold enough that I was looking forward to the next weekend, a local two-day festival.

That Monday, after the Rutledge festival, I happened to stop at Striplings, a lo-

cal general store, for their chicken pot pie—a staple in our home. I'd shopped there over the years and noticed that they featured local vendors of bread, cakes, soaps, jams, and jellies.

Standing there at the cash register with my chicken pot pie I took a leap of faith and asked the cashier, "I have a local business. How do you get to be a vendor here?" She took me to meet the owner, Andrea. I showed her pictures of my products from the Rutledge festival, which she really liked. I was heartened because it felt as though I was babbling.

Andrea's only hesitation was where to put the display. We walked through the store looking for possible locations. Her initial idea for the display was in a space in the airlock, a set of double entry doors. Andrea asked for pricing and told me that she would get back to me later in the week.

As I drove home I thought, "Is this real? Pinch me!" I put together proposed pricing and better pictures that very night, and with great hopefulness tempered by a bit of nervousness, sent them to her. By Wednesday we had agreed on pricing and quantity and I sold her 30 units. When I showed up on Friday to deliver, the display area set aside for me was not in the airlock but rather inside the store between the two cash registers. That was retail gold! The products sold so well that they requested 12 more. All units but 5 sold by the end of December.

Successful Seasonal Offerings

Based on that success, we turned to Valentine's Day. I worked with a local wholesaler to bring in roses, baby's breath, and leatherleaf. What an eye-opener it was to order wholesale. I had to mark up so that there was enough profit for me but also for an attractive price for the store to then mark up and sell to the final consumer. Andrea ordered 42 and was able to sell 37 units. The other aspect of retail that I learned was "shrinkage", the inability to sell product because of either shoplifting or perishability.

Our next holiday to tackle was Easter. This seemed to be a perfect time for pots of tulips since my flowers were not ready to harvest. Sales were good but not as successful as Valentine's Day. Between Easter and Mother's Day I was invited to the store's annual Taste of Georgia. This event allows Striplings' vendors to greet and mingle with customers to promote both Striplings' and the vendors' products. It was a great opportunity to meet current and future customers.

Easter success then gave way to Mother's Day, for which I supplied bouquets from my flower farm. They were filled with agrostemma, nigella, cornflowers, and bupleurum, and created a riot of fresh color that I was hopeful would be a hit. It was such a success that the demand exceeded my ability to supply!

By this time, Andrea and I were meeting regularly to exchange ideas for upcoming holidays and events. After Mother's Day, I had a standing order for bouquets every week, which has continued throughout the year. Spring bouquets gave way to summer ones filled with sunflowers, zinnias, celosia, gomphrena, and basil. The store will take flowers for as long as I am able to grow them during the year.

From June through today I have been supplying bouquets and sunflower bunches each week to Striplings. The sales have been steady with very little shrinkage. The display area is still at the front of the store, in a prime spot, between the two cash register stations. I have added a placard with our farm story and how we grow our flowers. Feedback from customers has been inspiring and heartening. They have been delighted to learn that the flowers they buy are grown locally.

Standing there at the cash register with my chicken pot pie I took a leap of faith and asked the cashier, "I have a local business. How do you get to be a vendor here?"

I have learned the importance of dependability, consistency, and communication. I am not as anxious as I used to be about every bouquet selling, and I have learned about the ebb and flow of buying patterns.

It's the Flower Lady!

I am so grateful that I've been given the opportunity to supply Valentine's Day flowers, Easter tulips, Mother's Day bouquets, graduation flowers, and weekly bouquets and bunches. As a result, my relationship with Striplings and the customers has changed over time. I have learned the importance of dependability, consistency, and communication. I am not as anxious as I used to be about every bouquet selling, and I have learned about the ebb and flow of buying patterns.

I especially get a kick out of delivering to the store and being greeted by, "Here's the flower lady!" I have even had customers call me and start the conversation with, "Are you the flower lady?" Just before the Raleigh conference, Andrea hired me to design, install and maintain the planters in front of the store. I am thrilled to now have a new hat to wear, that of "seasonal color specialist".

As we are coming up on almost a year, I can look back and assess the successful and less-than-successful offerings so that products and display can be improved. For this year, holiday flowers will be offered earlier, at the store's holiday open house in November. In addition to the products that were sold last year I will be offering larger planters of blooming amaryllis and paperwhites, suitable for centerpieces or entries. The selections of pot covers will expand beyond galvanized tin buckets. The burlap bags will contain simple instructions so that a purchaser will not feel intimidated about planting them. I will now buy the holiday products wholesale rather than retail.

I have started ranunculus and anemones to sell during the dark days of January and February when people crave flowers. For Valentine's Day there will be three price points, which should appeal to more customers. We may even try to sell flowers for St. Patrick's Day in 2019.

I was able to meet Val Schirmer at the Conference, tell her my story, and thank her. All of this because I read her Regional Report in *The Cut Flower Quarterly*. So thank you, Val; thank you ASCFG; and thank goodness for chicken pot pie!

Dancing Hearts Homestead in Monroe, Georgia, is the dream of Kevin and Mary Stephanie Kilroe. After many decades of hobby gardening we decided to put our experience and knowledge to the test and grow flowers. We grow sustainably among a community of like-minded farmers. Our five-acre farm reflects this life philosophy in our commitment to the bees that make the honey; to the flowers that provide the nectar; to the earth that supports the flower. We never use pesticides and fertilize only naturally with fish emulsion, our own chicken manure, worm compost, and comfrey that is grown right here on the farm.
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2019 New Varieties

Sakata Seed

Lisianthus 'Rosita 3'
Rosita is the standard in double-flowered lisianthus. With thick petals and strong stems, it is easy to transport the flowers without botrytis problems. Masses of rose-like flowers and long vase life please consumers. Rosita is available in groups 1, 2 and 3 for maximum flexibility of programming. Green, Lavender (new), Red (new), Blue (improved), Pink (improved).

Green

Pink Improved

Lavender

Red

American Takii

Fujimi Series

***Callistephus* Fujimi Series**
Fujimi is fusarium resistant with small leaves and reduced basal branching, making it ideal for high density planting. This series was bred to grow upright before plants begin to branch, producing sprays of brightly-colored flowers. The Fujimi series is available in three colors.

***Helianthus* 'Sunrich Summer Provence'**
Each petal is absolute perfection, arranged in a double row around a dark disk. 'Provence' is a deeper orange than 'Sunrich Orange'. It is the newest addition to the popular Sunrich series.

***Antirrhinum* F1 Legend Series**
Two stunning new colors, 'Legend Light Yellow' and 'Light Pink' are dense flower spikes with soft pink and yellow colors. Growing on sturdy stems with good color uniformity, the Legend Series makes impressive accents to any arrangement.

F1 Legend Series

***Brassica* 'Flare Rose'**
An additional color to the Flare series, 'Flare Rose' is a deep rose color with a strong waved leaf. Grown to have very early maturity, it is easy to get tall stems.

Lisianthus 'Arena III Purple'
This new addition to the Arena series has curly, thick petals with deep purple color. It has excellent doubleness but be careful for tip burn under high light intensity. The Arena series is available in 17 colors.

'Sunrich Summer Provence'

'Flare Rose'

'Arena III Purple'

William Dam Seeds

Celosia 'Sunday Orange Improved'
Has deeper colour, longer stem length, and less daylength sensitivity than the previous version. The vibrant colour stands out even more in the gardens and vase.

Dianthus Frisco Mix
An economical annual sweet William that blooms in 14 weeks from sowing with continuous bloom through summer. Good range of colours and bicolours.

Nicotiana 'Starlight Dancer'
Airy greenish-white blooms on long stems are a delicate filler in flower arrangements.

Poppy 'Flemish Antique Shades'
Fluffy double blooms in streaks of pink and white. This poppy also has large seed pods on curving stems.

Panicum 'Sprinkles'
Formerly known as 'Frosted Explosion'. Subtle fresh filler for bouquets—especially great with zinnias. The red-tinged green sprays look like fireworks. Receives great reactions from visitors to our trials. Colour may be more green in summer heat.

Oregano 'Zaatar'
Fragrant foliage for nosegays, with soft grey green fuzzy foliage and tiny white flowers.

Frisco Mix

'Sunday Orange Improved'

'Flemish Antique Shades'

'Sprinkles'

'Starlight Dancer'

'Zaatar'

GeoSeed

'Double Sun King'

Sunflower 'Double Sun King'
Six feet; Reselected and highly uniform. Full double flowers. Tall extra strong stems. For specialty cut flower production, field or high tunnel for cleaner double petals.

Zinnia 'Macarenia'
Grows to 20 inches; scarlet petals with sharply contrasting golden tips. Very vibrant. Large 3-inch mostly double flowers. Strong stems. Companion to 'Mazurkia'.

Zinnia 'Queeny Lime Orange'
2017 AAS Winner, 28" container, 36" garden. Gorgeous showstopper was the word for this variety in the 2017 trials. Unique new color, coral orange with lime green inner petals and red-rose centers, shifted to peachy orange with buttery lime inner ring and scarlet centers. Large 3-4" highly double, fluted dahlia-type flowers, strong stems. Very durable plant, showed little foliage wilt versus comparisons, a great beauty until summer's end.

Lisianthus Voyage 2 Series
Two feet in high light or broad spacing, three in lower light or close spacing; Group 2. Top-flowering habit. Large lushly double-fringed flowers in gorgeous colors. Strong petal texture for enhanced shipping and shelf life. Spring cropping. Deep Rose, Light Apricot, Champagne, Blue, Green, Pink, Yellow, White, Mix.

'Macarenia'

'Queeny Lime Orange'

Voyage 2 Series

'Big Blue'

Snapdragon Cool Series
For greenhouse forcing, grows to 40 inches with open spacing or high light, 60 inches with high density spacing or lower light; Group 1,2. Excellent winter-flowering series for cool conditions under high tunnel or greenhouse. Genetically matched, highly uniform across the series and within colors for stem length, spike quality and crop timing.

Noble Series

Cool Series

Stock Noble Series
30-36"; High double averaging 90% double-flowering types. Professional quality cut flower for summer, fall and winter sowing. Dense, broad flower spikes. Extra-early blooming, in range of 65-100 days from sowing (culture sheet available). Completely daylength neutral for reliable bud initiation without lighting.

***Salvia* interspecific 'Big Blue'**
Big spikes of pure deep blue flower continuously from midsummer to frost. The first of its kind from seed, easy to grow and super showy, thrives in heat, low water conditions. A wonderful booster for midsummer sales of large containers and spring sales to landscapers. Worth testing as specialty cut flower. Attracts hummingbirds, butterflies, and bees in the garden.

***Scabiosa atropurpurea* 'Oxford Blue'**
Grows to 36 inches; deep blue medium to large flowers. Reselected stock for true color and habit. Strong stems and long-lasting flowers.

'Blue Spear'

***Lavandula angustiflora* 'Blue Spear'**
Twelve inches tall, spreading to ten inches; extremely showy. Sturdy stems topped with broad and long 3-inch flower spikes. Prolific base branching produces a dense mass of deep blue flower spears, showy even from a distance. Easily grown, very uniform and fairly early when grown with minimum 13-hour daylength. For perennial containers and borders. Worth testing as a specialty cut flower.

'Oxford Blue'

Fred C. Gloeckner & Co. and Ednie Flower Bulb, Inc.

Lisianthus 'Arena 2 Purple Picotee'
The Arena series continues to introduce new colors each year, now totalling 18 varieties, including all flowering groups: 1, 2, 3, and 4. Distinguished by its high quality, fully double three-inch flowers on tall, strong, and sturdy, branching stems.

Scabiosa 'QIS Black Purple'
The QIS series is now available as Clean Seed form. With the addition of 'Black Purple', QIS has 6 distinct colors; Dark Blue, Deep Red, Salmon Pink Scarlet, White, and a formulated mix. QIS is the best cut scabiosa series with its long stems and large pincushion flowers. Height: 32-36 inches.

Lepidium 'Green Dragon'
'Green Dragon' is the ultimate filler. It is distinguished by its flowers covering a longer stretch of the stem, with a wider and denser structure, as well as reduced yellowing of foliage, and longer vase life. Height: 3 feet.

Calla 'Beatrix'
Tall, sturdy stems with blooms that blend from orange to peach. 5-7 blooms per 20/22cm tuber. Speckled foliage.

Cosmos 'Xsenia'
A breeding breakthrough for its remarkable color: terra cotta orange with rose edges. Tones change with the sunlight intensity.

'Arena 2 Purple Picotee'

'Beatrix'

'QIS Black Purple'

'Green Dragon'

'Xsenia'

Double Oriental Lily 'Empress'
Improved double white with green highlights. Pollenless. 44" tall, with 3-4 buds for a size 16/18 bulb. New and exclusive.

Geum 'Mango'
A new, mango-colored geum. These dainty, double flowers add a touch of whimsy to bouquets. At 20", this short, but sweet, full sun perennial is hardy in zones 5-9. New for 2019.

Tulip 'Lue Anne Beck'
A new Triumph tulip named after Lue Anne Beck, the wife of Ron Beck, longtime Bulb Division Manager for Fred C. Gloeckner, who retired in 2018. This 18" tulip works great as a cut flower, adding a splash of raspberry with creamy undertones to spring bouquets. New and exclusive.

Dahlia 'Myrthe'
New decorative dahlia with 4½" blooms in peachy salmon tones. Productive plants grow to 38" tall. Step away from the overused blush and burgundy dahlias and try 'Myrthe' next season.

LA Lily 'Armandale'
A dark red LA Lily with dark stamens, and nearly black specks at the base of the petals. Plants grow 47" tall, with a forcing time of 11 weeks. Expect 5-7 blooms from a size 14/16 bulb.

Triple Hyacinth
Developed for cut flower production, these triple hyacinths are too good for the landscape. They should be appreciated up close. Available in pink or white, these have the traditional scent, but with triple petals on each floret.

'Empress'

'Armandale'

'Lue Anne Beck'

'Mango'

'Myrthe"

Triple Hyacinth

Triple Hyacinth

Harris Seeds

***Aquilegia* Kirigami Series**
An improvement of the popular Origami series, with improved flower timing, this old-fashioned garden favorite has uniquely upward-facing blooms! Choose from three stunning colors or a mix of pink, purple, red, and white shades.

Delphinium Jenny's Pearl Series
This Harris Seeds' Exclusive brings a tall airy spike to arrangements in stunning blue or pink colors. Individual florets are also ideal for detail work like boutonnieres, corsages, and hair flowers.

Zinnia Zinderella Series
Scabiosa-type zinnias are novelties which have received lots of attention in recent years. For 2019 we bring three new eye-catching colors! The many layers of petals create a full, tufted look that adds texture to designs. Approximately 20% single blooms. Colors are Orange, Red, and White.

Sunflower Sunfinity™
This next generation of sunflower offers nonstop blooming, multiple branches and more flowers all season long. Choose these indeterminate plants for "mini" sunflowers ideally used in mixed bouquets or for cut-your-own operations.

'ProCut White Lite'

Sunflower 'ProCut Orange Excel'
This new addition brings deeper orange petals with dark brown disk than the standard 'ProCut Gold', as well as blooms 5-7 days early when planted side by side.

Sunflower 'ProCut White Lite'
WOW! This is the color we've been waiting for. Gorgeous clean white petals surround a light brown disk, a great addition alongside 'ProCut White Nite'!

Sunflower SunFill™ Series
A unique addition to bouquets, harvest pre-bloom for a look similar to artichokes, in both green and purple. Though they do open to bloom, the petals are quite short, so the emphasis is on the calyx and disk.

Celosia 'Asian Garden'
A pollinator magnet, this All-America Selections winner produces bright pink spikes all summer long. A great addition for added texture in bouquets, and holds well in boutonnieres.

'ProCut Orange Excel'

SunFill™ Series

'Asian Garden'

Zabo Plant

'Surfside'

'Toscanini'

'Tampa'

'Benson'

LA 'Surfside'
A promising new orange LA, especially because of the bigger flower and more intense orange color compared to most other LAs. It is really worth trying as it is selected from an Italian greenhouse during the hot summer. It has a good bud count, and by using 14-16 you will have at least three flowers per stem.

LA 'Toscanini'
One of the most potential new white LAs. It is a clear white color, even in budding stage. It is approximately the same length and speed as 'Litouwen', which is mostly known to our growers. We advise you to go for a 14-16 to have a perfect balance in bud count and volume.

LA 'Tampa'
This new yellow LA is already proven by Dutch LA grower 'Bredefleur'. These results made us secure this variety in our assortment. Our own Zabo Plant trial greenhouses confirmed that this one is on the right track. A shiny yellow color, which will brighten up any arrangement.

OR 'Benson'
Elegance at its finest! This is the slogan for this new Oriental variety. Especially because of its puffy, shiny pink flower buds. All the buds will be in the top of the plant which makes it a wonderful presentation of lily flowers. Growing this variety is possible in every size, for every kind of grower. You can adapt your growing size, based on your customers' desires in volume and bud count. Size 14-16 will already give you a secured average of 3. A must-try for your own curiosity

LOO 'Buriano'
The latest hybrid LOO! This means that we crossed a Longiflorum not one time, but two times with an Oriental. This makes 'Buriano' have much longer-lasting flowers, because of its thick flower petals. The stem is extremely strong and easy to handle because all the flowers are looking up. This latest LOO hybrid can be considered as the sister to the variety 'Paposo' which is already has proven itself to cut flower growers worldwide, and some retailers who tried it out in the UK.

'Buriano'

'Editha'

OR 'Silverside'
It looks like finally there is a white Oriental that can be considered a true contender for 'Santander'. The flower buds are even bigger. The perfect combination of enough buds and extremely large flowers makes this variety a true winner. Last year's test results have confirmed this clearly. This variety will remain up-facing in the hot summers. You will get 3 flower buds by growing a 14-16 size bulb.

'Silverside'

OT 'Bellamonte'
One of the strongest varieties ever bred. An extremely strong stem heavy with foliage. The leaves will remain on the stem even if it doesn't get all the sunlight it should. Nice puffy buds exposing a baby pink color. Pleasantly scented and an easy grower. This variety will make any grower and consumer happy.

OT 'Luson'
An upward-facing 'Conca D'Or'! Can you imagine growing a 'Conca D'Or' or similar color type which is easier to handle? 'Luson' has this very elegant contrast of white flower petals with a yellow center. Remember Oriental 'Cherbourg' from way back? This is a strong growing variety, a good flower bud count and again, upward facing. This is what most of you were asking for.

'Aisha'

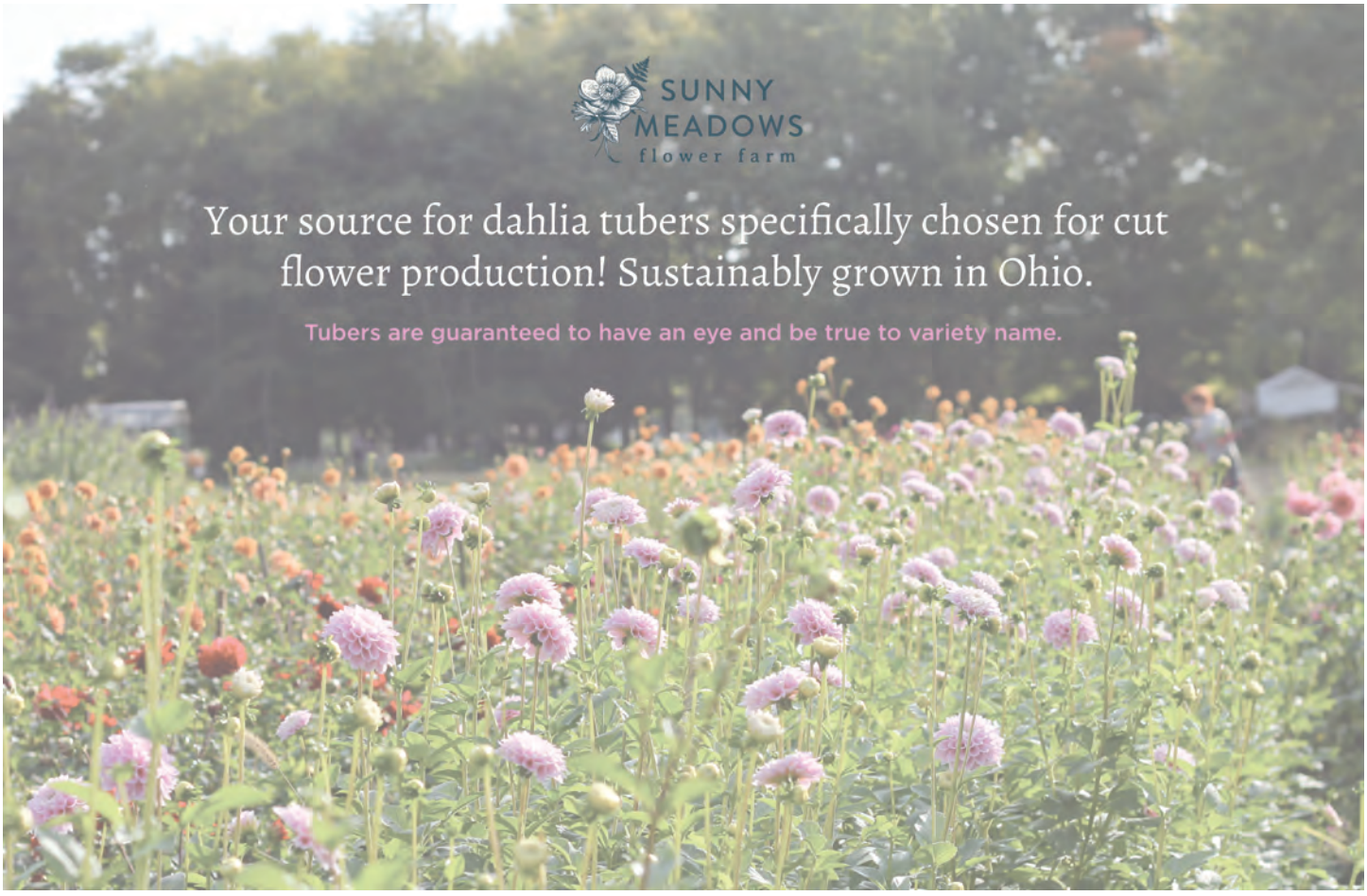
'Bellamonte'

'Luson'

Rose Lily 'Aisha'
'Aisha' has the most wonderful color contrast of all Rose Lilys, even in all lilies available. The greenish colors on the white flower petals are brilliant. Its very large flowers will make your bouquet or bunch perfect. Also it is very nice to use for weddings as it is pollen free. 'Aisha' is a medium height variety which takes about 100 days to be fully grown. The flower buds open easily and can be grown in multiple environments.

Rose Lily 'Editha'
'Editha' is one of the cutest soft pink varieties in the Rose Lily series. Especially in the supermarket business this variety is a winner. The consumers like this flower very much because it looks so sweet. Talking about sweet, it also has a very sweet scent with it. 'Editha' has the looks of 'Aisha' based on length, growing time, and flower bud count. These two could easily match as growing partners.

Having an event but not enough blooms?
Or a shop you need to stock outside of your regular growing season?
We've got you covered! SMFF now shipping our flowers nationwide!
SUNNY MEADOWS flower farm


SUNNY MEADOWS flower farm
Your source for dahlia tubers specifically chosen for cut flower production! Sustainably grown in Ohio.
Tubers are guaranteed to have an eye and be true to variety name.

NORTHEAST

Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, Rhode Island, and Vermont

Carolyn Snell
Carolyn Snell Designs
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Hi Friends!

It was so nice to meet many of you in Raleigh as we buzzed about new varieties, tarping, and our favorite varieties of eucalyptus. I especially appreciated Lennie Larkin's talk "Making Weddings Work for YOU" where she discussed figuring in enough time and attention to make weddings a serious and planned part of her business.

I've designed and sold flowers for hundreds of weddings after about ten years of serious flower farming, and—maybe you all have already heard me say this—I'm kind of disenchanted with weddings in general. I think part of why I feel that way is I have been piling the wedding correspondence and prep work on top of regular weekly flower farm routines, and part is also the culture of weddings as a showcase of taste and one-upmanship. I sometimes even forget that folks are having a milestone celebration and gathering of their people; instead I am caught up in whether my flowers are ready for their close-up. Then I feel as though maybe I have turned into a monster.

Lennie explained that for her, doing weddings in her area is the best way for her flowers to be valuable enough for her to keep farming, so she had to find a way to make other people's big moments routine for her by hiring enough helpers, charging enough to cover all the bits and pieces and time, and keeping her communication clear about what information she needs when, and in what format the clients should send it to her.

I continue to learn how to be selective in which weddings (and other projects) I take on, and I will definitely use some of the ideas Lennie shared as I plan my 2019 season. Here are some tips I have picked up over the last few seasons that have helped me streamline things.

1. I used to end some of my initial emails with "Please feel free to reach out with any further questions, ideas, or concerns." I don't write that anymore. I might say over the phone "Any other flower ideas or concerns at this point?" but I try not to encourage a lot of back and forth.

2. I bought a stepladder and a folding table that always live in my van. This way I don't have to remember to load them or try to fit them, I always have them with me on delivery. A big part of being (and feeling) professional is about taking up space. It doesn't feel nice to have to ask the venue or the caterer for a table for you to stage on, and it doesn't feel nice to adjust arrangements on the floor or ground. Now my helper and I seek out a shady spot close to the dining space and just set up our table. It's very empowering.

3. I try to systematize things. I rejected this idea for years ("Each event is unique and custom!") and it worked until it didn't. The more you can know for yourself which vase you like to transport bouquets in and which box you like to pack centerpieces in, the fewer frustrating late nights you'll spend packing and wishing you already had your boxes planned out.

4. Work with other vendors. I have developed a relationship with a planner in my area, and we often use vessels she rents for the centerpieces. That way I don't have to keep a big inventory, and she and her team do the breakdown. The trick with this is making sure I get my hands on the vessels early enough in the week to fill them with chicken wire, and to bill time for picking up the vessels at her studio if necessary.

5. I hired my sister to field my email inquiries. A big part of that job is saying "I'm sorry, we aren't available." and then referring other florists in our area. Even though I feel relieved when I decline a project, saying no over and over was really sucking the life out of me. Sometimes I felt like I had to take a project on because I had waited too long to say no. Now, Margaret gets back to people with a no right away, or she starts the proposal process. In the past I might struggle saying no gracefully in person or on the phone. This year I took up saying "Oh, my sister manages my schedule these days, you should email her." And then I might text her and say "Let's pass on this one." And then: boom! I'm transplanting celosia with my team; meanwhile my business correspondence remains professional.

Van load with a ladder and table bungeed in.

I get most giddy about orange tulips!

I hope to continue to improve at flowering up events of varying sizes as well as some big parties that don't happen to be weddings!

As we all continue to plan for the next season and the next few years on our farms I want to echo a sentiment I have read in many issues of *The Cut Flower Quarterly*. Planting perennials and bulbs and trees and seeds is an act of supreme optimism. This thing we do that lights us up is about hope and faith. In this climate with four seasons, winter gives us a clean slate for a new year. I've got next spring's tulips and double daffs on my mind and I am giddy about them.

MID-ATLANTIC

Delaware, Maryland, New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Virginia, and West Virginia

Lisa Ziegler
The Gardener's Workshop
lisa@shoptgw.com

What a conference! While it is the great talks and tours that beckon many of us to attend, it's the connecting with others that proves so priceless for me. You can't help but be encouraged meeting with old friends and sitting with first-time attendees. I love hearing what they are doing and adapting to the swings of business life. The excitement gives me the energy I need to come home and go at business again. This fellowship with others pursuing not a hobby, but this viable business of farming becomes a lifestyle for many of us. Once farming seeps into your bones, there doesn't appear to be any turning back.

I am struck by how my perspective can be blindsided by what I see on a tour. Learning more about the no-till method of Spring Forth Farm was an eye opener. Jonathan and Megan Leiss are tweaking their way to the best practices for flower farming while building and protecting their soil. I was so intrigued and inspired!

Jillian and Ross Mickens of Open Door Farm have a packing shed that was full of clever ideas. The setup up of this building was so well thought out and planned. I loved the hand tool and employees' corner that had some easy and inexpensive ideas that are easy to implement. So refreshing to get new ideas when I was feeling kind of stale in this department.

As I was considering which parts of the conference to write about I was struck by how significant this "coming together" is to keeping our businesses alive. Not only does a conference bring us all together to share, but it pulls some of us out of a hole, may help you to get the muster to conquer a problem, perhaps reveal a new path in business or even to receive an award for a lifetime of achievements that has benefited all of us.

The ASCFG 30th year anniversary conference is on the books and it was the best yet!

Jillian and Ross Mickens of Open Door Farm have a packing shed that was full of clever ideas.

SOUTHEAST

Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Tennessee

Val Schirmer
Three Toads Farm
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My head is still reeling from everything I learned, saw, and experienced during the Growers' School, speaker sessions, farm tours, and celebration that were all part of the 30th anniversary conference in Raleigh.

In thinking about what to pull for this column, I kept coming back to something that won't be part of the videos from the conference sessions, and I think it's of so much value to every single one of us, whether we're a yet-to-start grower, and one who's an old hand (and perhaps rarely learns something that hasn't already been tried or thought about).

It came during the farm tour session on Wednesday, at Jonathan and Megan Leiss' Spring Forth Farm. Jonathan opened his comments with these deceptively simple words, **"First have a goal for life and then have the farm fit into it. Revisit it all the time."** Hands down, this is the #1 BEST piece of advice from the 30th ASCFG Conference.

For me, and I think for others, we begin flower farming in a small way and before we know it, the farm almost (or certainly so) takes over and frames our lives, consuming our time, our thoughts, and a big chunk of our finances.

What Jonathan and Megan have done is to consciously flip that, fitting their farm into their life goals—and then revisiting it all the time to adjust what they're doing. They believe it's so important that farmers have clear goals for balancing their lives and their farms.

Here are my takeaways from their story

The pair has been farming for five years (and I noticed have been ASCFG members since 2013). When they moved to their property, which is in Hurdle Mills, North Carolina, and was almost an hour and a half bus ride from our Raleigh hotel, it had been mostly an old tobacco farm, and they set to work to rebuild their soil. They are a 100% no-till small farm, growing on about a half acre.

They said they didn't want to be completely dependent on the farm for their entire income (Jonathan works off the farm as a firefighter) and they want it to be seasonal, since they like being off the farm and in New England in summer. (Don't stop reading if this doesn't reflect your life goals! Use it as an example of defining what you want for your life and then setting up the farm around that.)

Jonathan said that originally they tried to sell to everyone, all the time—how many of us are basically trying to do just that?—and the best thing that ever happened is when they couldn't get into the farmers' market.

That set them on the path of selling to florists, which is now all they do. Florists are the best value for the pair, as they make about the same amount of money, but it takes less time. And this is what lets them focus on seasonal flowers: spring (April-June) and fall (September-October). Florists don't buy much product in the summer and there are virtually no weddings going on.

This year they added their 30x96' automated hoophouse and because of that structure, they determined that they made as much money through the first weekend in July as they did all of last year.

Jonathan and Megan Leiss of Spring Forth Farm with Mr. Bingley, ASCFG greeter extraordinaire.

Year-old automated hoophouse holds 8 no-till permanent beds, with the sides automatically raised and lowered, based on temperature. Is it perfect? Just about! The only thing they would do differently is to have 6' sidewalls instead of 5' versions.

So, their new plan for 2019: focus and specialize in the seasonal business, selling to florists, only in the spring. That's a perfect example of how they have a life goal, fit the farm into that and revisit it all the time. Instead of trying to grow for practically non-existent sales in the summer, or add revenue for fall sales, they've decided to make the highest percentage of their sales during the high-value spring florist season.

Before going further, here's a note on their hoophouse, which everyone was drooling over. They purchased it from Morgan County Seeds in Barnett, Missouri, and built it a year ago. It's 30x96' and now has 8 permanent raised beds (all of the beds on their no-till farm are intended to be permanent). Jonathan said the only thing he'd do differently is to have 6' sidewalls instead of the 5' they have. The side walls are raised and lowered automatically based on temperature, thanks to the J&D Manufacturing control box, which works like a dream. He said the hoophouse, including the automated controls, was $9,500.

Some thoughts on no-till farming

Before going to Spring Forth Farm, I didn't think I was particularly interested in no-till methods. Sure, it makes a lot of sense to not be tilling, but I didn't think it was something that we'd do. Now, we're seriously reconsidering, and here's why.

Permanent raised beds, covered by silage tarps to keep out weeds. When they get ready to plant, they just pull back the tarps and use a fork to very lightly crack the soil.

Jonathan and Megan made handling these big silage tarps look easy, and organized! Unfolding a stored tarp, over the permanent beds (it takes just two people). When you're done, just fold it back up.

The Leisses have found they can grow a lot on a tiny amount of land with small investment by using no-till and permanent raised beds. Jonathan and Megan learned a lot about this from Bare Mountain Farm's blogs.

The permanent raised beds were built by hiring neighbors with tobacco bed shapers. Last year they added a cubic yard of compost and another one of ground leaf mold to each of their 80'x30" beds (200 sq ft). Leaf mold is essentially ground-up leaf mulch that has decomposed for a year.

When a crop comes out, the silage tarp goes down. (Note: their silage tarps are from FarmTek. The cheapest place to get tarps and landscape fabric is from the closest place you can buy it, to keep shipping costs down.)

The pair demonstrated how they fold their tarps and landscape cloth, which they've figured out through trial and error (and they're still together after all of that!). Their method allows you to put the tarp at the end of the bed with each person grabbing a side and walking down the bed as the tarp unfolds—genius! It's okay to fold them when they're wet.

When they get ready to replant:

- Pull back the tarps, fold them up.
- Use a fork to lightly loosen the soil, forking the uncovered bed right away. Their method: stick the fork in and crack the soil, walking down one side of the bed and then the other. They leave the drip tape in place while doing this.
- Top-dress with organic Harmony fertilizer.
- Roll out landscape fabric.
- Plant.

This is just a glimpse into Jonathan and Megan's practices and philosophy. They asked me to emphasize that while they believe it's so important for farmers to have clear goals for balancing their lives and their farms, it doesn't have to be as radical as what they're doing. It could be as simple as not working at all on Sundays (let someone else harvest peonies!) or training up a crew enough to take a family vacation every summer.

For all of us it might simply come down to having a goal for your life, have the farm fit into—not take over—those goals, and then keep revisiting it all the time. That's a deceptively simple notion!

LIVE

I hope you'll join me for my ASCFG "Ask the Experts" live Facebook session on Monday, Nov. 12 at 8 p.m. ET. It's all about forcing glorious bulbs for the holidays and beyond. I'll be showing and answering questions about how I force the bulbs, create container bulb gardens, and sell, using Dutch and southern hemisphere amaryllis bulbs, paperwhites, and spring bulbs that are perfect for containers. Looking forward to seeing you then! **Val Schirmer**

NORTH AND CENTRAL

Iowa, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Ohio, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Wyoming

Jamie Rohda
Harvest Home
harvesthomenjr@aol.com

The end is in sight! At least in my neck of the woods, by the time you read this our season will be over, or at least winding down. I honestly don't know how you Southern growers do it, gardening all year round. I feel like our season is a marathon and I'm almost to the finish line!

I'm also feeling a bit of "survivor's guilt" as I write this. Many of you have suffered so many extreme weather events this year that I feel a bit guilty when I look back on our summer and realize that even though it was hotter than normal, it was really pretty smooth sailing most of the time. Our personal life has been a bit challenging this year but I feel like we've kind of hit our groove with our business. We're focusing entirely on our florist/designer sales with just a few events on the farm. A first for us this year was hosting a design workshop in conjunction with one of our designers. The weather was perfect, the flowers bountiful, and the designs lovely! Everyone had a great time and we plan to do more of them next year.

A perfect day for a workshop!

Janis Harris and I sold Design Competition tickets (votes) to benefit the ASCFG Research Foundation.

Another ASCFG conference has come and gone and what a great one it was! The design competition was amazing! Such an inspiring display of beautiful product and talent. I so enjoyed getting to meet some of you and wish I could have spent more time talking to each of you. Hopefully we'll meet up again! I feel like this conference gave me the energy to finish up this year strong and to start planning for another season. If you've never made it to a conference I highly recommend that you plan for at least one of them next year. They are definitely game changers.

As I write, our dahlia season here in zone 5 is reaching its peak but by the time you read this we will probably have dug all the tubers. Dahlias are a fairly new crop for us but I feel like this past winter we finally landed on what works for us for digging, processing, and storing these beauties. I think dahlias, with the amount of work involved, are borderline profitable for us anyway, and losing a lot of them in storage would push them over that line into the zero profit area. I've seen so many ways to dig and store dahlias and I know every beginning grower wants to know the secret but unfortunately, or maybe fortunately, I don't think there is

just one way to do it. There can be a lot of variables depending on your climate, soil, storage facility, natural humidity levels, and more.

So far we've waited until a light frost has taken out the dahlia tops before we start digging them. I know that alone is a point for discussion but so far it's worked for us. We are a very small farm with no large equipment so once the frost hits we find the shovels! I've watched videos of people digging dahlias where they pull them up, shake off the soil, and move on to the next one. Not so lucky here! If your soil is anything like ours your tubers will probably need a good washing once dug. Last year we set up bulb crates right in the garden and washed them on the spot so that all the soil stayed in the garden. It's generally a cold, wet, mucky job.

Once the tuber clumps have been washed we pile them into bulb crates. If it's a nice day we may be able to let them sit and dry a bit outside. If frost is threatening for that night then we move them into our greenhouse or barn. I feel like this stage is a critical step. Knowing when they have dried enough but not too much is important for your success in storing them. Depending on the weather it might just be a few hours or a day or two before we start dividing and storing them. Again, depending on the weather, we set up some tables in the barn or outside and start the great dahlia dissection. My goal is not to divide all the tubers as I find that especially smaller tubers will store better when left in clumps. I want to divide them only enough to open up the hollow stems so they can dry, and also break down the clumps a bit so that they fit better into the crates. Some of the larger varieties, like the CAL's, get divided more into individual tubers.

Once divided, the tubers are packed into bulb crates that are lined with newspapers and have a layer of pine shavings in the bottom. We get the pine shavings in large bales from the local co-op. The shavings are layered in with the tubers to prevent them from touching each other too much. If a tuber happens to rot, the pine shavings help absorb any moisture so you don't lose a whole crate of tubers. Once a crate is full we put it in our walk-in cooler which during the winter we keep above freezing. Since the room is super insulated it doesn't take much to keep it from freezing. We put a little milk house heater in the cooler and attach a thermostat to it. Once all the crates are stacked in the cooler we put a piece of plastic loosely over the whole pile to help hold in the humidity. Last winter we kept the cooler around 44 degrees and basically kept the humidity as high as we could. It started out around 90% but was closer to 80% by late winter. Our winters can be very cold and dry here so keeping the humidity up is our biggest challenge. At one point we sat buckets of water in the cooler with the crates. We've had really good luck with this method and lost only a handful of tubers last winter. I feel that no matter the method that you use, the important part is keeping an eye on them, and making adjustments as needed.

Norm Rohda digging dahlias.

Freshly-washed tubers.

Dry tubers in crates after washing.

Dividing tubers.

Lined with paper and pine shavings.

Layer with more pine shavings and store in cooler.

Wrap loosely in plastic.

Dahlias are a lot of work but who can resist these beauties!

Now that the tubers are in storage it's time to dig out the seed catalogs and start planning and plotting for next season. I hope it's a great one for all of you!

SOUTH AND CENTRAL

Arizona, Arkansas, Colorado, Louisiana,New Mexico, Oklahoma, Texas, and Utah

Shanti Rade
Whipstone Farm
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How to capture your customers' hearts through your newsletter.

It was such an honor be a first-time presenter at the ASCFG Conference in Raleigh. As I said in our presentation on farmers' markets, I can't believe my luck to have been a part of this group for only a few years, and to already be serving on the Board and speaking at a Conference. It was such a treat to see old friends and to meet new ones—thanks to everyone who attended. And to those who didn't, I can't wait to meet you at the next Conference!

One thing I completely skipped over in my talk, despite it being in my notes and everything, was one very important piece on marketing and branding: the power of the newsletter. And since I don't have the same time constraints here, I get to elaborate a little more than I originally planned on.

Long before I heard that getting someone on your newsletter list was the most important thing in digital marketing, I started writing one. It was even before I was active on social media. I am not sure where I got the motivation for it, but I had customers who wanted to know ahead of time what we would be bringing to market. Every week I would send out a list via email—super basic. From that meager beginning, I slowly added more of a story each week, along with more photos, more recipes, more links, and anything I could think up to add interesting content.

While I have transitioned to using social media a lot more, I still consider my newsletter my number one connection to my customers. It could be our customers' demographics and where they feel comfortable navigating online, but I actually feel that it is the format that allows for a longer story to be told, that it gets delivered straight to them and doesn't disappear, and it even greets them by their name. I get many comments in person at the market (or via email reply) each week from folks saying how they love the newsletter, how they feel connected to the farm, and how much they appreciate that I take the time to write it each and EVERY week.

Sometimes I wonder if it's too much (do people really want to hear me whine about the weather again?) but according to the feedback I get, I would have to say the answer to that is a resounding "NO". The pressure of the weekly newsletter has made me much better at documenting our farm life. If I haven't taken many photos by Thursday of each week, I start to panic and I make sure capturing some real-time images is a priority, so my Friday night date with newsletter writing is easier. It's awful to have a great story to tell but no images to go along with it. Where conversely, when I have a hard time dredging up what to say, all I have to do is sort through the photos from the week and magically there it is the outline for my weekly story.

Why is an Email List So Important?

It may seem hard to believe that emails have so much impact when I know most of us suffer from email burnout. But all the statistics show that sales driven by emails have a much higher return than other forms of marketing. When you build an email list, it's yours. You don't have to worry about a third party changing the rules. In contrast, a free service like Facebook can decide to decrease the reach you had with your fans, in order to encourage you to use paid ads to boost your reach. You don't have these types of restrictions when someone has given you permission to send them useful emails. Your words are delivered straight to your audience's inbox—there are no metrics, politics, or offers of paid posts to get in your way.

How to Create Content?

Your readers are going to continue reading your newsletter only if you keep the content interesting. Luckily for us flower farmers there is a neverending stream of beauty to share, as well as all the behind-the-scenes of what it takes to grow flowers, that there is a never a lack of interesting content. Average folks are so clueless about what it takes to grow anything that it makes a big impression when you show them the process. Be consistent—whether you write weekly, monthly or quarterly—make it a priority. Be authentic; if writing isn't your jam, you can get someone else to do it, but if they don't actually know anything about the inner workings of your business, it probably won't be very interesting or authentic. It is important that your audience doesn't feel like all you want is their money. Be sure to bring value and usefulness to their lives. In my newsletter, I may say what crops are new that week or what kind of specials we are offering, but I generally keep my tone very informative and not like a sales pitch at all.

My newsletters are basically a farm journal. I describe whatever is going on in a given week. I am ruthlessly honest about the ups and downs of farming, and I really pour my heart and soul into writing these newsletters in a way I rarely find myself doing on other media platforms. I inevitably always talk about the weather; I try to challenge myself at times not to talk about the weather, but it never works. As I heard several times at the ASCFG conference "Weather dictates everything on a farm." And it's so true. Most folks probably rarely notice the first frost, but to a farmer it changes your whole world, and I like to bring people into that world.

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I talk about what's doing well, what's doing poorly, what we are planting, what we are harvesting, what we are tending to in between, bug issues, weed explosions, and of course weather events. It gives the readers an immensely greater appreciation for all the work that is takes to bring food and flowers to the table. People who are gardeners really appreciate knowing what we are working on—it's basically like a free on-gardening class for locals. And if I want to get people excited about something we need to sell, all I have to do is focus on it in the newsletter and inevitably it sells like hotcakes. Sometimes it feels crazy and wrong to have this much power to sway people. But I justify this to myself in two ways. For one,

these are the same marketing tools that other advertisers and big companies are using. And two, it is because I have developed a trust with my readers and always operate with integrity.

Logistics of Creating Your Newsletter

You definitely want to use an email marketing service. This will help manage your subscribers, allowing them to opt in and opt out on their own. There are tons of higher level options you can begin to use once you build your list and get comfortable with your service, things like segments, tags, automation, trickle campaigns, landing pages, and more, not to mention all the cool data you can dive into (open rates, click rates, etc.). Using an email service also helps you create a nice layout with zero graphic design skills. We use Mailchimp, which is free for up to 2,000 subscribers, but there are plenty of other great services out there. I actually celebrated when I had to transition to a paying account, because look how well my marketing efforts had paid off.

How to Build Your Email List

For starters, add all the relevant contacts you already have in your email address book. Next, put a paper or digital sign up at your market or wherever you interact with your customers. Make sure you have a sign-up form on your website—a pop-up box is even better.

You can drive sign-ups by putting teasers out on social media. As in "Go to our website to sign up for our newsletter, which goes out tomorrow; it will be full of information on how to grow dahlias". Or in real time "Sign up for our newsletter at the market today and get a free bunch of sunflowers." Ask your current readers to send your newsletter on to a friend they think would also enjoy it.

This is a little more advanced, but you can create a lead magnet. A lead magnet is an incentive that marketers offer to potential customers in exchange for their email address. Lead magnets usually offer a piece of digital, downloadable content, such as a free PDF (for example "how to grow dahlias" or "complete cut flower care guide", an ebook, or a video. If it's authentic and relevant to your audience, they will want it.

It is easy for people to click and follow your business on social media, but I believe giving away your email address takes a lot more commitment and trust. It is a currency of sorts and should be treated as such. I take this trust seriously and try to stay true to the mission of what we are doing. I don't plug things I don't believe in and I try to stay sensitive to the fact that the demographic of our readership is of varying ages, interests, and political leanings.

More on Digital Marketing

I happened to listen to a Farmer-to-Farmer Podcast back in November of 2017. The guest, Corinna Bench, is a vegetable CSA farmer and she totally transformed her business by taking traditional digital marketing classes and tools, and using them for her farm business. She had so much response from this podcast that she created a digital marketing training lab (this includes free weekly emails and a private Facebook group with weekly videos). She shares tons of content for free. Listening and learning from her has really helped our marketing efforts. I highly suggest getting to know her at mydigitalfarmer.com

Get Started

You can probably tell by now that I am really excited about digital newsletters. I follow quite a few farmer friends who also write a newsletter and I learn so much from them. I feel that this format is my number one marketing tool. I really implore you to try it out. Write your first newsletter and see how it feels. Once you get going you won't look back. If you need some inspiration on what to write or just some commiseration from a fellow flower farmer, sign up for my newsletter on our website www.whipstone.com and please make sure to tell me what you think of it!

My thought was you could just use the top section of the newsletter that is more like a narrative and skip the other stuff like crop list and recipes. also, feel free to grab any of the photos from the newsletter to go along with the story - but if that doesn't work (or resolution is good enough) please let me know.

Sample Newsletters - here are a few to choose from:

https://us10.campaign-archive.com/?u=1673c9aca68e7952f9579e003&id=13d11b117f

https://us10.campaign-archive.com/?u=1673c9aca68e7952f9579e003&id=d552a2974f

https://us10.campaign-archive.com/?u=1673c9aca68e7952f9579e003&id=b562971fee

WEST AND NORTHWEST

Alaska, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington

Lennie Larkin
B-Side Farm
lennielarkin@gmail.com

What I Learned In Raleigh

No matter how busy the season, how hard it is to pull away for an ASCFG event, within hours of being there I always find myself newly refreshed and inspired. It's one of those things I can just count on in life. Here are some of my most important takeaways from the conference, tours, busses, and bar stools.

Build a relationship with your soil, and continue to be a student in micro-nutrients. I had the good fortune of sitting with some seasoned soil nerds on the bus one day, and was excited to be listening in on a conversation that felt, well, over my head. There's always so much more to learn about soil and soil building. I scribbled down some book titles to read this winter, including Neal Kinsey's *Hands-On Agronomy*.

Organization at Sassafras Fork Farm.

Organize the farm, make your life easier. I've read *The Lean Farm*, too. But have you seen my farm? It felt so far off from what was even remotely possible for me, that I just kind of laughed it off. We toured Spring Forth Farm where everything was just so, Open Door Farm where they made little tweaks as needed such as moving the whole toolshed over to the base of one of the fields, and Sassafras Fork Farm where they've over time honed in on just what their needs are and built the structures to fit (including the dreamiest design studio). Being around such organization gave me such peace of mind that I'm inspired to finally step up my organization game on the farm.

Really, truly, make your business fit your lifestyle. You'll hear this from a lot of us, I'm sure, but I was blown away that Spring Forth Farm finally decided to stop producing flowers in the fall. They're going to focus exclusively on spring, where they have their systems down, can be first to market with many crops, and aren't as challenged by the climate. No more fussing with fall. They'll put all their energy into those early months, and then take a needed break with their growing family. It's gutsy and I love their determination and realization that it's far better to do one thing (or season) really well, rather than try to do it all and just putter along.

Ecologically-based weed management pro, Brenda Smith.

Think more carefully about your weeds over the winter downtime. I listened closely to Brenda's talk on weeds, and realized that I don't spend enough time giving careful thought to what my weeds are, and how I can best plan around them. I've been trying hard to develop a peaceful coexistence with my bindweed, but what else can I do to learn how to really work around this problem for years and years to come?

A great team is key. I spent a lot of time asking questions of business owners who really rely on their staff. Bailey Hale flew out his badass two-lady crew from Vermont, and told me how integral they are to Ardelia's operation and how he plans to invest in them and their place at the farm. It's rare to find people who treat your business with the care that you do, so you've got to hold onto them. Similarly, Keith Cramer told me stories of his years figuring out his crew, what organizational structure worked best, and how to keep them coming back.

Mimo Davis-Duschack, Lennie Larkin, Shanti Rade, and Stephanie Hall.

Thank you all for a great conference! This is only the tip of the iceberg of what I'll take away from it. I look forward to seeing many of you in Denver.

CANADA

Alberta, British Columbia, Manitoba, New Brunswick, Newfoundland and Labrador, Nova Scotia, Ontario, Prince Edward Island, Quebec, and Saskatchewan

Janis Harris
Harris Flower Farm
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Thankful, gracious, hardworking, humble, and steadfast.

These are all words that can be used to describe a farmer. A farmer of any crop be it grains, chickens or flowers. Farming calls to you. It brings you home or helps you find home.

During the week before the busiest holiday for a Canadian farmer (Canadian Thanksgiving) I am thinking of all the farmers out there, working hard against obstacles to bring in the harvest.

I'm thinking of my friends in the prairies who experienced their first frost weeks before fall even arrived. Their drive and work ethic to produce flowers in such a short season is commendable. I don't know that I would want to work so hard for such a short season but they do it. Seeing their fields under a blanket of snow when other growers are still in sandals must be so hard. But yet they start their seeds year after year.

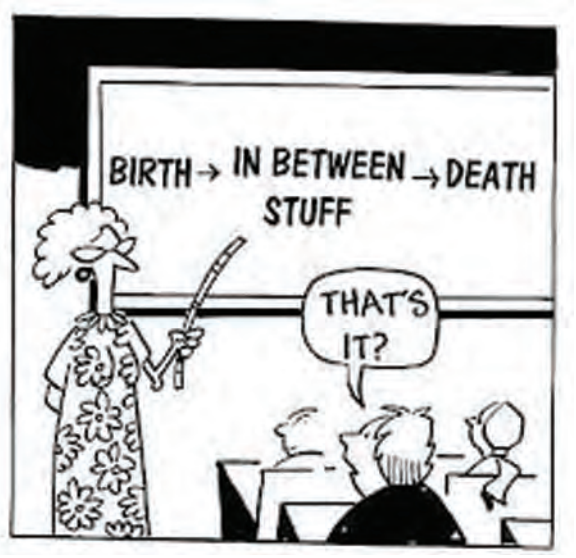
I am also thinking of the farmers in our circle who were affected by crazy weather this year. Drought, then flood, tornado winds, and hail. A farmer continues even after natural disaster. The farmer will pick up the blown-over trays, recover the hoophouses, replant the drowned plugs, and start over, knowing that plants will grow, plugs with bloom and tubers can be bought again.

I am thinking of the farmers dealing with tough times in their personal lives. Health and relationship issues, or just the trials of running a business, household, and farm. We don't know what challenges others are facing. Some are very private and some take comfort in telling their stories. Farming can be all encompassing but we need to remember that life will pass you by while you are spending hours bunching stems.

At the National Conference in Raleigh, I had the pleasure of introducing Mark Cain. His presentation was about work/life balance. I'm sure right away you thought, "Ya ok, that unicorn". But even small adjustments in the way you think about your farm can improve the balance. I'm not saying it's easy to equal the scales but there is time for YOU, the you that isn't the farm!

The Raleigh conference was the first time my whole family had left the farm for more than one night in about 6 years. Before I left I made the week lists, wrote out the orders and tasks to be done, and guess what… the farm survived; my helpers knew what they needed to do and got it done. This was a major milestone for me. I learned that we can leave the farm! Too often farmers keep the reins pretty tight and think that they are the only one who can manage the farm. In reality the farm is running you and you need to set boundaries for the farm.

Megan and Jonathan Leiss of Spring Forth Farm talked about setting the boundaries for their farm and revisiting them each year to make sure they still apply. What do you want your "in between" to look like?



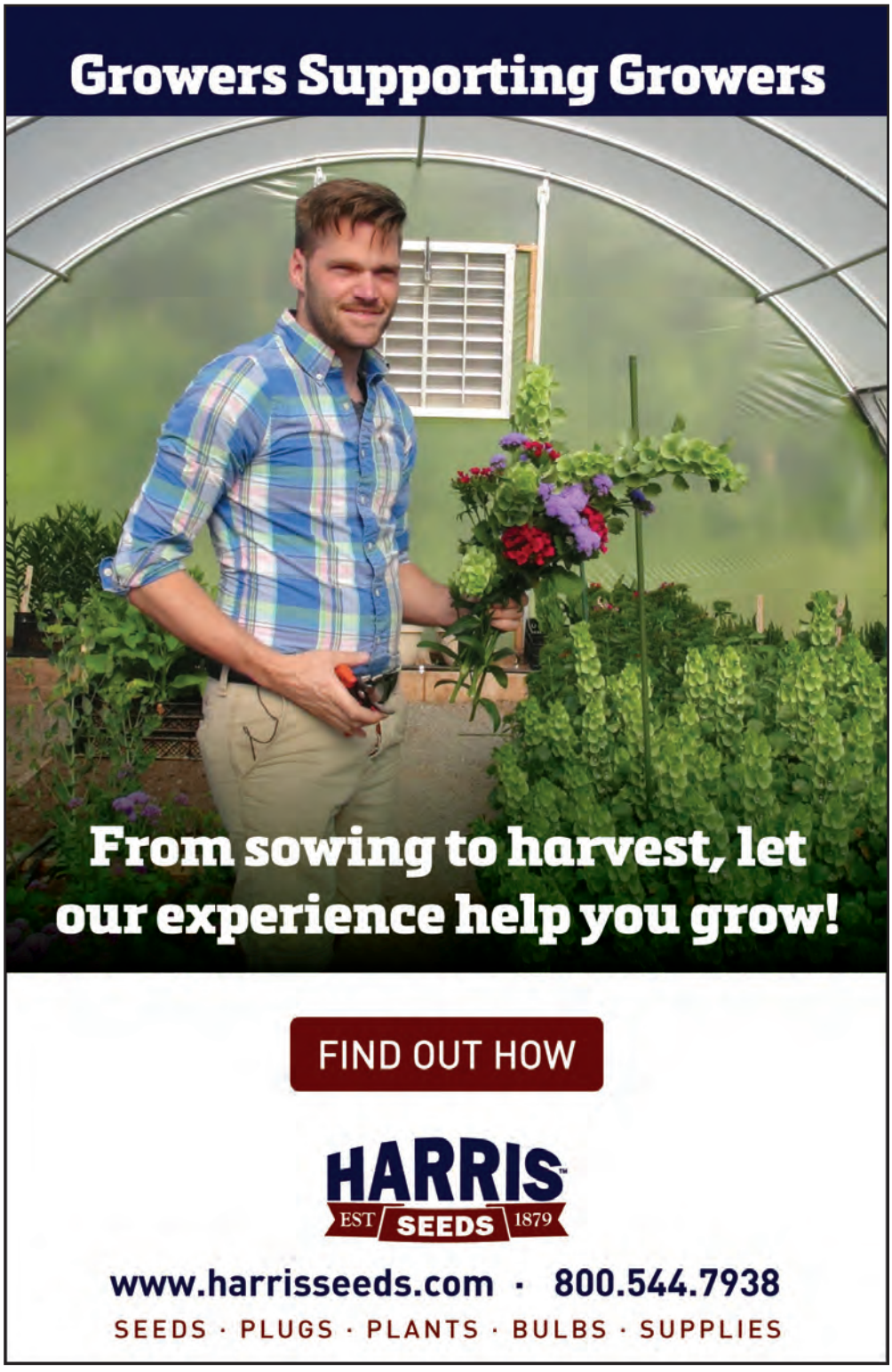
I think of the flower farmer leaders in our industry. Ones who are humbled, so touched, and almost surprised that they would be chosen for an award. Lynn Byczynski was presented the Allan Armitage Leadership Award at the conference. (CONGRATS!!) It was touching thinking of how many of us in the room started flower farming because of her book. Judy asked Lynn to come and moderate some of the sessions to make sure she was in attendance. Lynn was surprised when she was named the award winner. I couldn't think of anyone else more deserving. It's that humble nature that is so wonderful to be a part of, and there are so many in this organization that are very humble by nature. That willingness to help is one of the best parts of the ASCFG family. I had several members stop me in the hall or in a food line and thank me for taking the time to answer a question that they posted on the Facebook group. It may seem small to you but it is so important to someone else.

The Outstanding Service Award was awarded to Dave Dowling in recognition of years of valuable service and long-lasting contributions to the success of the ASCFG and its members. Not a more fitting recipient with that description. WWDD (What Would Dave Do) is a saying I have heard many times. His wealth of flower knowledge, humorous nature, and warm smile makes him the Dave we all know and respect. I

appreciate him as a colleague and friend and thank him for all he has and will do for flower farmers across the continent.

During the bus rides for the conference tours and in the hallways on breaks, there was one common topic of conversation. Flower farming is hard work—can you really make a living doing this? This is where I wholeheartedly believe that the steadfast nature of a farmer is what it takes. Can you make a living? The answer comes back to the core values that you set for your business, family, and life. Rome wasn't built overnight and neither is a flower farm. Start small, learn lots, ask a billion questions, but more importantly listen to the answers and grow your farm to the size you want or need it to be. Also be patient, while also being kind to yourself. And plant perennials and woodies early in your farming career!

I am ready to call it a day after hours harvesting for this week's orders, working on fall cleanup, and watching the weather app to guess how many more days the fields will be spared from Jack Frost. Today I also made sure to have supper ready for my family while I attended a business mentoring meeting and then set aside the time to help my littles with their reading homework before bed. I am nowhere near having a work/life balance but I am working on being more aware of how I want to spend my "in between".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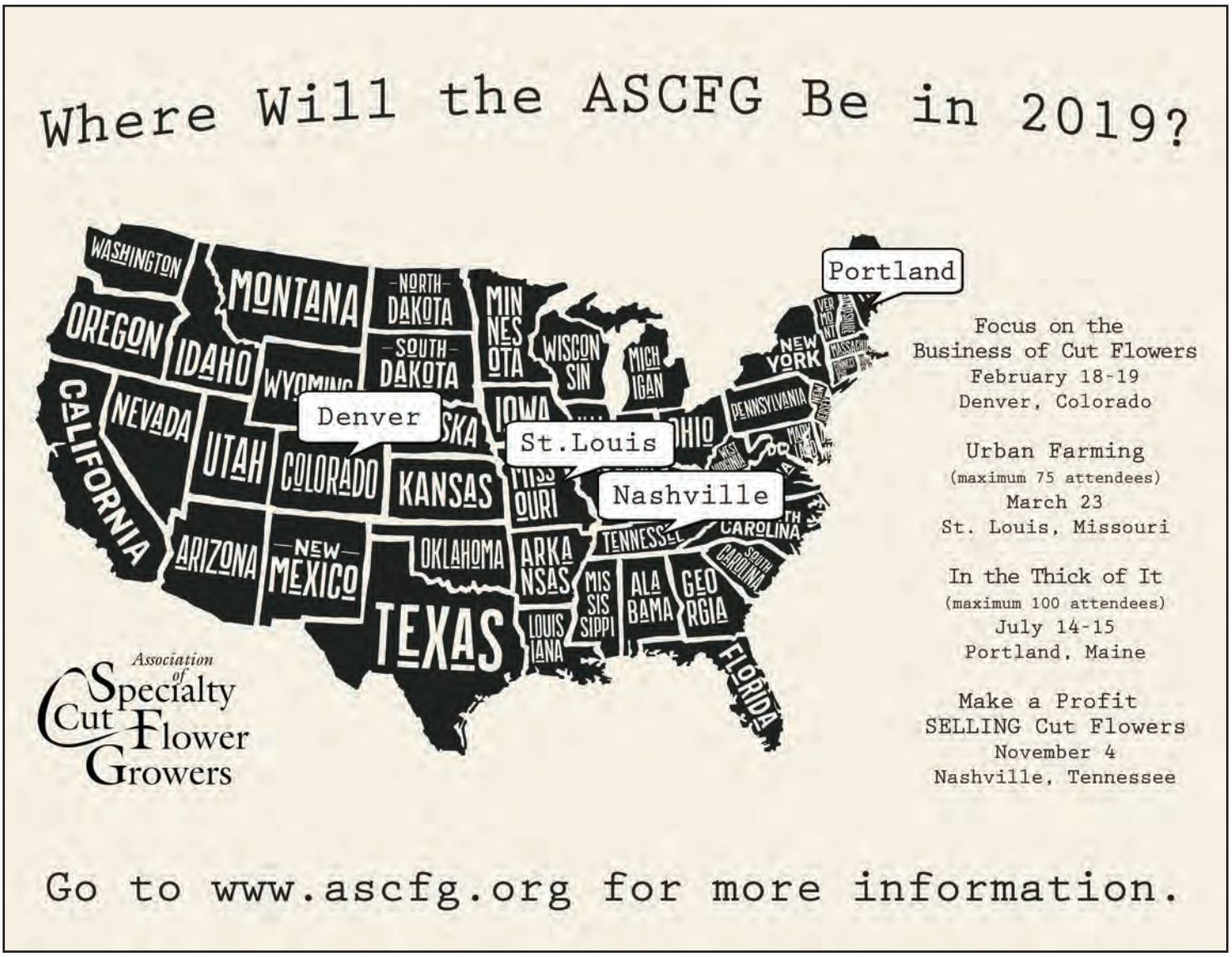
Shannon Adams, Davenport, IA
Anna Alexandre, Cedar Grove, NC
Heather Andersen, Humble Hill Gardens, Caesarea, ON, CANADA
Ellen Beberman, Sunwarm Gardens, Vermontville, NY
Julie Biggs, Old Truck Flower Farm, Granville, OH
Lisa Biles, Rolling Branch Farms, Naylor, GA
Amy Bordovsky, Iris & the Bee, Pasadena, TX
Ranell Bridges, Two Bridges Farm, Louisburg, NC
Don Bright, Midlothian, VA
Rachel Bullock, Missi Flowers, Brooklyn, NY
Elizabeth Burch, Rosefield Farm and Flowers, Appomattox, VA
Rebecca Burtch, Lockwood's Garden Center, Hamburg, NY
Erica Bush, On the Hill Flower Farm, Bremen, GA
Denise Butler, Lewisburg, TN
Sara Caldwell, Farmside Flowers, Crestwood, KY
Elizabeth Calvelage, Little Bean Farm and Larder, Chardon, OH
Christin Campbell, Clementine Botanical Art, Austin, TX
Caitlin Carnahan, Diamond Day Bouquet, Chimacum, WA
Mary Carroll, Edgefield, SC
Sam Chappel, Sweet Pea's Winery and Flower Farm, Bar Harbor, ME
Gary Chastagner, Washington State University, Puyallup, WA
Raaya Churgin, Tiferes Chaen Flowers/Henpecked Husband Farms, Speonk, NY
Kari Cieslak, Farm and Flora, Sycamore, IL
Priscilla Coleman, Three Sisters Farm, Beaufort, SC
Sarah Daken, Grateful Gardeners, Gaithersburg, MD
Sonata Dallison, Serenada Flower Farm, Kaisiadoriu raj, LITHUANIA
Christine Davies, Free Folk Farm, Anderson, IN
Regina Dee, Kenning and Clover, Lake Bluff, IL
Rachel Detweiler, Maitri Farm, Amenia, NY
Marianne Diorio, Superflower47, Shelter Island, NY
Anne Durham, Louisville, KY
Sidney Egly, Gypsy Flower Farm, Poolesville, MD
Brenda Embry, Hindsville, AR
Ruth Ensor, Acre by Acre Farm, Manchester, MD
Katrina Fleming, Fleming Enterprises, Mechanicsville, VA
Elizabeth Gallagher, Lizzy Bee Sustainable Flower Farm, Waikoloa, HI
Kimberly Gambrill, Little Red Hen Flower Farm, Sykesville, MD
Allison Garrett, Elf Leaf Farm, Landrum, SC
Erica Goza, Branching Out, Mayesville, SC
Amornthip Green, Carlinville, IL
Marguerite Green, Fat River Flowers, New Orleans, LA
Teresa Gregson, Bees & Trees Farm, Elkwood, VA
Jayna Guehlstorff, The Swallow's Nest, Council Bluffs, IA
Lisa Haas, Tabletop Alchemist, Fairfield, CA
Rebecca Harben, Springfield, VA
Ali Harrison, Florage, Paradise, UT
Iris Hernandez, Flowers by Iris, Kissimmee, FL
Karen Hertzog, Hertzog Fine Gardening, Stockton, NJ
Mary Hickman, Helping Hands Gardening, Davis, CA
Race Higgins, PanAmerican Seed, Santa Paula, CA
Nancy Hunt, Kara Gardens, Lawrence, KS
Jenna Iannucci, Kindred Flora, Rochester, NY
Lindsey Jakubowski, Catalpa Flower Farm, Syracuse, NY
Kara Jamison, Blooming Joy Flower Co., Christiana, TN
Sharon Jangaard, Freeland, WA
Shannon Jones, Wandering Trails Farm, Hartwell, GA
Tiffany Jones, Blomma Flower Farm, San Clemente, CA
Nancy Jordan Ganden, Landscapes Holding Co.,Winchester, ON, CANADA
Valerie Kay, Verma Flowers, Yangon, MYANMAR
Meredith Keating, Open Spigot Farm, Walland, TN
Laura E. Kniffin, New Glarus, WI
Cassie Kubecka, Acres at the Creek, Montgomery, TX
Robin Lang, Outremont, QC, CANADA
Pauline Lawrence, Lincoln, CA
Heather Leach, Artemisia Orchard, Avondale, PA
Cheramie Lee, Monroe, CT
Nicole Lerma, Seed and Stone Homestead, Springville, IA
Bailey Lindgren, Stalk & Pistil Flower Farm, Waterford, ME
Adam Luikart, Poca, WV
Moira MacKinnon, Love & Fantasy Flowers, Edmonton, AB, CANADA
Hilde Makkink, Makkink's Sunflower Farm, Tillsonburg, ON, CANADA
Hannah Marcellino, Hartsville, TN
Michael Marchand, Agricultural Holdings, Cypress, TX
Annie Martinie, Hummingbird Flower Farm, Semora, NC
Jennifer Mather, Ripple Stream Farm, Fallston, MD
Maria Maxit, Maxit Flower Design, Houston, TX
Cynthia McCaskill, Quarters Farm, Charlottesville, VA
Melissa McDonald, Whispering Elm Farm, Paola, KS
Jessica-Ann Miedema, Little Flora Gem, Enderby, BC, CANADA
Barbara Mihm, Blossoms of Pinecrest, Miami, FL
Debi Miller, The Farmer's Wife Flowers, Fort Collins, CO
Cheryl Monroe, Myersville, MD
Roger L. Morgan, Stillwater Farm Services, Fredericksburg, VA
Mackenzie Nichols, Society of American Florists, New York, NY
Sara Payne, Northfield, MN
Jason Peckham, Ferolbink Farms, Inc., Tiverton, RI
Walter Perry, Perry's Florist and Gardens, Glen Rock, NJ
Anne and Dan Phythyon, Franklin Flower Farm, Franklin, NC
Molly Picchi, Puck's Garden, Petaluma, CA



Nancy Preslar, Terra Flowers, Signal Mountain, TN
Amanda Pritchard, Whisper Springs Farm, Cleveland, TN
Elmer Pritchett, Frank's Flowers, Carolina Shores, NC
Janet Reimer, Early Bird Blooms, Armstrong, BC, CANADA
Shawn Reiterman, Sonoran Flora, Phoenix, AZ
Beth Renault, Floret, Mount Desert, ME
Pamela Riddick, Petal Pushers OBX, Jarvisburg, NC
Samantha Ritter, Sea Change Farm and Flower, Rock Hill, NY
Alicia Robinson, Unless Farms, Lebanon, TN
Serena Robison, Peach Creek Blooms, Santa Rosa Beach, FL
Christa Ross, Sweeter Days Farm, Ashland City, TN
Katrina Saffarek, B Rosey & Co., Langdon, AB, CANADA
Lisa Schrank, Aleman Acres, Hamilton, TX
Cathy Schweinegruber, Belle Fleur Gardens, Fombell,, PA
Laurie Scotton, Clear Springs Farm, Julian, NC
Danette Siegrist, Brownfield Market & Farm, Brownfield, ME
Lucinda Smetana, Betwixt Flower Farm, Grayslake, IL
Stacy Smith, Fox & Wolfe Farm, Pine Grove, PA
Reid Snyder, PanAmerican Seed, Santa Paula, CA
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Alice VanderHaak, Lowlands Farm, Snohomish, WA
Sandy Varelmann, Feathered Cottage, Mayfield Village, OH
Dorie Von Thun Knott, Dorie's Farm Fresh Flowers, Monmouth Junction, NJ
Marianne Wallace, Mud and Blossom, Larkspur, CA
Amie Walter, Columbus, OH
Annette Waterbeek, Maple Ridge, BC, CANADA
Nancy Weigandt, Detroit Abloom, Detroit, MI
Cathy Wells, Unity Farm, Shelburne, VT
Vanya Wenger, Everland Cove, Barnardsville, NC
Elizabeth Wilbur, Elizabella Flower Farm, Ames, IA
Shelah Wind Smith, Blooming Bee Farm, Umpqua, OR
Karen Zera, Yellow Dog Farm, Bristol, WI

February 18-19, 2019 Denver, Colorado

Whether you're a veteran grower or just getting started, you'll find valuable insights in these sessions. Learn from growers of all experiences and business types how they originated and maintain their cut flower companies.

Watch your email for registration information!

Monday, February 18

Creating and Successfully Implementing Enterprise Budgets
Are you a slave to beauty? Would you stop growing a crop you love because you find that you are paying money to grow it? News Flash: you don't have to, but it's still a good idea to know. This class will offer tools and techniques for crop costing annual and perennial floral crops, geared toward small and medium scale production. Find efficiencies and know your bottom price for smart decision making and a more profitable farm.
Diane Szukovathy, Jello Mold Farm,Mount Vernon, Washington

Whom to Sell to, How, and Why: Finding the Right Sales Channels
What sales outlets work for you will depend on local demands, and how you want your business to run. Come hear us talk about our changing market, what types of customers have become our main outlets, and how we have streamlined our systems to sell to them.
Gretel and Steve Adams, Sunny Meadows Flower Farm, Columbus, Ohio

The Evolution of Our Crop List at The Fresh Herb Company
Here's where we'll hear the ins and outs of this seasoned local farm. They don't grow everything, and they don't have to! Take a look into the Fresh Herb Company to learn what crops they've focused on throughout the years, what they've dropped, and why.
Chet Anderson, The Fresh Herb Company, Longmont, Colorado

Panel discussion with Jennie Love, Love 'n Fresh Flowers; Mandy and Steve O'Shea, 3 Porch Farm; and Diane Szukovathy, Jello Mold Farm.
"Transitioning Our Farms into Real Sustainability". This seasoned panel will explore the ways they are making tough choices to farm smarter, bring back a work/life balance, and plan for the long haul with their bodies, assets, land, and Mother Earth.

Beginner **CONCURRENT SESSIONS** Advanced

Farm Financials For Beginners
This session will help you create a strong financial understanding of how to start a small farm on a tight budget. Topics will include managing money in the first few years, prioritizing what to get with a small budget, projecting your sales a year out, grants and other fundraising opportunities for small farmers, and the basic farm office.
Laura Beth Resnick, Butterbee Farm, Pikesville, Maryland

Building A Business Plan
This session is all about how to create clear, achievable goals that will help you fulfill your farm dreams. Participants will learn how Laura Beth creates her plans and their actualization over six years. We'll look at other working farms' plans, and we'll end with hands-on thought exercises to get your plans rolling
Laura Beth Resnick, Butterbee Farm, Pikesville, Maryland

Advanced Accounting: Beyond the P&L
Poppy Davis
C2C Consulting, Davis, California
Gretel and Steve Adams, Sunny Meadows Flower Farm, Columbus, Ohio

With Great Power Comes Great Responsibility: What You Need To Know about Hiring and Managing a Crew
Shanti and Carolyn will share their approaches to running their teams from labor laws to true costs to making their farms places folks want to work.
Carolyn Snell, Snell Family Farm, Bar Mills, Maine
Shanti Rade, Whipstone Farm, Paulden, Arizona

Tuesday, February 19

Beginner **CONCURRENT SESSIONS** Advanced

Just the Essentials: What Beginning Farmers Need to Know About QuickBooks and Farm Taxes
This workshop will cover the basic accounting needs of a small farm – financial accounting, tax accounting, and cost accounting, and how to set QuickBooks up to address all three needs. We will also cover the tax records you need to keep for important tax items that are not captured by QuickBooks including how to account for a property you purchased and use as a home and a business, and other out of pocket expenses such as mileage, meals and entertainment, and attending this conference.
Poppy Davis, C2C Consulting, Davis, California

Working Closely With Florists
This workshop will focus on marketing to florists and what it means to have a productive relationship with them. We'll cover how to market your oncoming crops to them, how to plant and grow for them, how to price for a profit, and much more. We will discuss how a synergistic relationship with our florist has skyrocketed our company and exposed us to a whole new market of client as we discovered more lucrative avenues for our beautiful flowers.
Anna Jane Kocon, Little State Flower Company, Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Expanding Retail and CSA Sales
Grace Lam, Fivefork Farms, Upton, Massachusetts

Boost Yourself!
From on- and off-the-farm workshops and demos, growing and selling seasonal specialty bulb gardens, selling six-packs of specialty flowers and foliages before planting them out and more, Val will give you a behind-the-scenes look at how Three Toads Farm has incorporated these profit-generators into their year-round portfolio.
Val Schirmer, Three Toads Farm, Winchester, Kentucky

Long-Range Business Planning and Equity Building
Jennie Love, Love 'n Fresh Flowers, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Making the Numbers Work For You: Implementing Data-driven Decision Making to Increase Profits
Are you looking to increase the efficiency and profitability of your operation? Do you find yourself increasing sales outlets or the number of varieties grown, but don't see changes to your bottom line? Lily Schneider, a seasoned vegetable farmer turned business consultant, will take you through different scenarios of how she and her clients have used their sales and expense data to increase profits and improve quality of life. She will share tips, tricks, and lessons learned from working closely with a flower grower in the San Francisco Bay Area.
Lily Schneider, farm business consultant, Fairfield, California

Mentors and Mentees Will Work Togeter

The ASCFG Mentor Program continues to match experienced cut flower growers with those just getting started, or needing some extra guidance. Here are the pairings for the 2019-2020 cycle.

Mentor Janet Bachmann of Riverbend Gardens in Fayetteville, Tennessee will work with Beth Foose, Little Bluestem Farm, Carthage, Mississippi.

Jana Lamboy of Hastings Field, Geneva, New York, is paired with Mentee Blake Hill, Rock Steady Farm & Flowers, in Millerton, New York.

In Iowa, Quinton Tschetter of Tschetters' Flowers in Oskaloosa will work with new grower Nicole Lerma, Seed and Stone Homestead, Springville.

Mentor Michelle Elston, Roots Cut Flower Farm, Carlisle, Pennsylvania was matched with Alyssa Van Alstine, Liberty Plants, in Collegeville, Pennsylvania.

Linda Chapman of Harvest Moon Farm in Spencer, Indiana, and Kristiana Coutu at Liberty Hill Harvest in Kalamazoo, Michigan will work together.

Oregon Flowers' Martin Mesker, in Aurora, will mentor Priya Thakkar of Raising Joy Farm in Corvallis.

Congratulations to all these growers, and thank you for your participation in the ASCFG Mentor Program.

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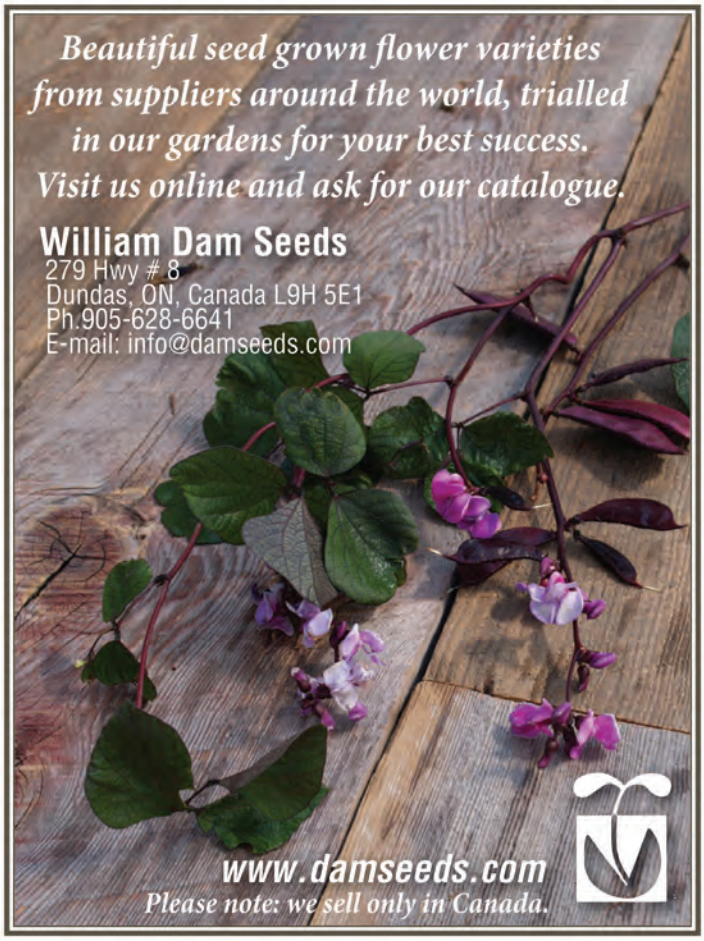
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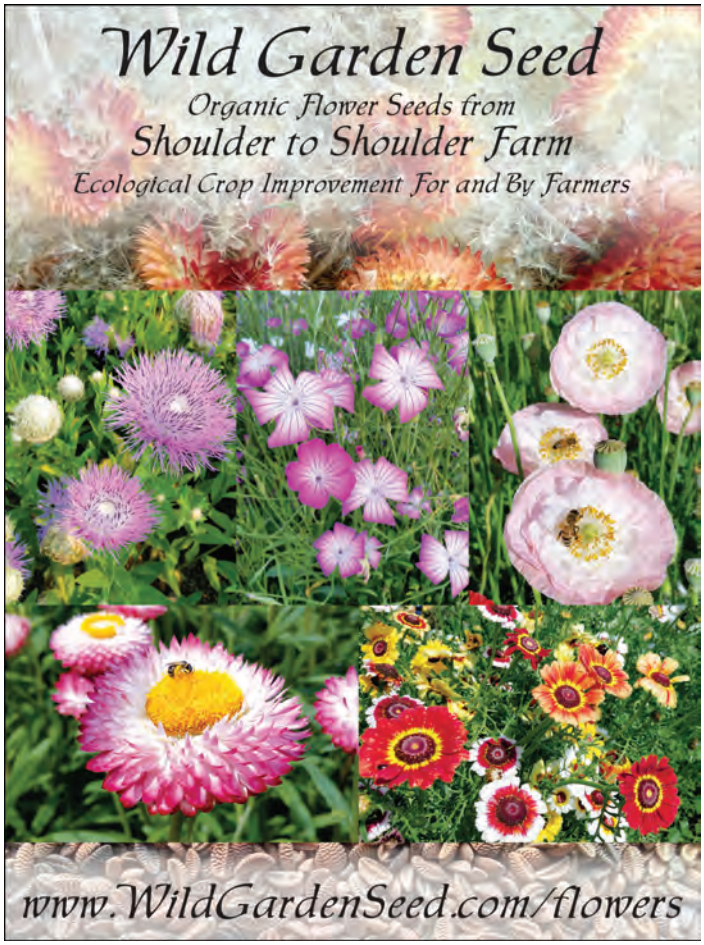

Kent Miles

Anna Glenn

Kate Watters

Yousseff Darwich

Rita Anders

Carolyn Snell

Alicain Carlson

Julia Asherman

Judy Laushman, Lynn Byczynski, Dan Nagengast

Joe Schmitt

Conga line livens up Growers' School attendees

Alex Hitt, Betsy Hitt, John Dole

Carol and Bernie Van Essendelft
Judy and Howie Lubbers

Chris Wien, Karen Hertzog, Mimo Davis-Duschack

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Paula Rice, John LaSalle, Barbara Lamborne

Tom Wikstrom, Diane Barrette, Chas Gill

Liz Nabi, Gaylene Moldt, Gretchen Langston

The Trade Show was bustling Tuesday night

Ingram McCall, Ben Bergmann

It Was a Very Good Year

Judy M. Laushman

It seems we started talking about the ASCFG's 30th Anniversary just the other day; now it's the end of the year and time to wrap up the celebrating and congratulating.

Many of the events from the Raleigh Conference have been covered elsewhere in this issue, but I'd like to reiterate one point that may have been buried in the confetti and balloons. (We didn't have confetti and balloons, but it sounds festive, doesn't it?)

We've enjoyed the organization's phenomenal increase in membership the last four years and the recent influx of new growers into the cut flower industry. The ASCFG has worked hard to connect and educate these flower farmers.

But we must also remember and commemorate those who have been members since the beginning, who continue to find value in their membership, and renew year after year. These growers laid the foundation of the organization, and built the framework that brought us through the teen years, the lean years, and now, apparently, to our green years.

The Old Guard: Judy Laushman, Jim Nau, Dave Dowling, and John Dole.

The Old Guard and the New: Leah Cook, Anna Alexandre, Lisbeth Rasmussen, and Joan Thorndike.

Thank you to those who've attended countless national conferences and regional meetings, who hosted tours and mentored mentees, who served on the Board of Directors, donated to the Research Foundation, or evaluated new varieties through our Trials programs. I was grateful to see so many of you in Raleigh. Your dedication and support have carried the ASCFG through its first 30 years, and will continue to lead us into the future.

We've now grown sufficiently to produce ripples throughout some of our supporting industries. For the last few years we've been hearing this seed company is sold out of a particular variety, or that bulb supplier has a limited number of that lily cultivar. So many growers are buying so much material so much earlier than in the past that a New Varieties section mailed in winter is old news. We're experimenting with this fall issue by publishing the New Varieties section now, spotlighting as many companies' new cut flower selections as we could. The hope is that those who aren't included here will be seen in the winter magazine, and we'll start the cycle again next fall.

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